

Recent Moves by Food labelling System in Japan

NAOHIRO MASUDA

Director

Food Labelling Division,

Consumer Affairs Agency

<Summary>

An improvement of the Food Labelling system has been considered to be a pending issue in Japan, because the present food labelling system is regulated by two or more laws. Since Consumer Affairs Agency was established on September 2009, the Agency has been given the mandate to govern several laws as a single agency to administer the food labeling system that is now governed by such as Food Sanitary Act, the Law concerning standardization and proper labeling of agricultural and forestry products (JAS Law) and Health Promotion Act, etc.

That is to say, it can be said that circumstance of introducing the unification on Food Labelling system is becoming to be good situations. “Consumer Basic Plan” (determined and adopted on March 30, 2010 at Cabinet meeting) aims to investigate,

- 1) To interpret and enforce systematically existing food labeling related laws
- 2) To improve the actual operations and enforcement regarding food labeling system and grasp the subjects to be solved.

Since then, Roundtable on Unification of Food Labelling has been held several times based upon the Consumer Basic Plan. In Roundtable meeting on Unification of Food Labelling, following subjects have been mainly discussed and summarized.

- Legal framework for Unification of Food Labelling
- Legible and easy-to-understand labelling format for consumers

I hereby present the outcomes concluded in the Roundtable meeting.

Human Nutrition and Regulatory Science

—Nutrition Labelling Change Approach on Nutrition—

NORIMASA HOSOYA, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus (Nutrition)

University of Tokyo

<Summary>

Nutrition Labelling promotes the development of “food and nutrition” into “human nutrition”, and contributes to the diet by providing “human services” as an aspect of human nutrition.

Nutrition Labelling separates food and diet by distinguishing the two with different types of information. It provides “food information” based on the nutrient values listed in the food-composition table. It also provides “dietary information” based on the actual measurement of nutrients and calories in processed foods.

Meanwhile, there is “food-based dietary information”, which is founded on foods and nutrients that constitute the diet; and “nutrient-based dietary information”, which is founded on how nutrients are metabolized in the human body and affect the state of health. Thus Nutrition Labelling is regulated in the international arena (CODEX, FAO/WHO) with “nutrition claims” that are based on food-based dietary information, and “health claims” that are based on nutrient-based dietary information.

Within the present-day nutrition practices, Nutrition Labelling contributes to the dissolving of nutrition deficiency. Its contribution also extends to the promotion of health and the reduction of the risk of diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCD), which is supported by scientific evidence.

In Japan, the present-day Nutrition Labelling issue remains unchanged: Japan stands self-centered in terms of nutrition-related policies and activities, keeping everything within its national premises, not being aware of global trends. This situation is quite unfortunate not only for Japan but also for the rest of the world.

As a responsible citizen and a consumer in Japan, I have made the proposal to assess and coordinate the tackling of nutrition issues, and to develop policies in Japan with the perspective of Regulatory Science. I feel that it is of utmost necessity to harmonize Japan’s commitment towards nutrition issues with that of the world---to work together with the international community towards the same objectives, with the same means, in order to challenge those issues. Only then could Japan make a positive contribution to the international community.

Report on the Symposium
“New Frontiers of Integrated Food Science for ‘Food and Health’ ”
Organized by the ILSI Japan-Endowed Chair of Functional Food
Genomics

YUJI NAKAI, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
ILSI Japan-Endowed Chair of
Functional Food Science and Nutrigenomics
Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences
The University of Tokyo

<Summary>

The symposium was held at Yayoi Auditorium, Ichijo Hall, The University of Tokyo on June 5, 2012, and attracted a capacity audience of more than 350 people. In this symposium, the activities and achievements to date of the 2nd 5-year-term, which began December 2008, were presented. The speakers consisted of 5 researchers from the Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, The University of Tokyo, 3 from public research institutions and hospitals, and 8 from food and cosmetics companies.

This symposium began with the message from Prof. Nagasawa, Dean of the Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, The University of Tokyo. Next, Prof. Abe, The University of Tokyo, delivered the opening lecture.

These were followed by 5 technical sessions: “Nutrigenomic studies on the nutritional physiology and safety of minerals”, “Nutrigenomic studies on lifestyle related diseases and immunology”, “Sensory science and nutrigenomics”, “Nutrigenomic studies on the functions of proteins and peptides”, and “Nutrigenomic studies on the functions of probiotics”.

The symposium focused on the important activities and accomplishments of this 2nd 5-year-term. In addition, future nutrigenomic studies and the tasks for next term were also discussed.

Report of the 44th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives

RYUJI YAMAGUCHI, Ph.D.
Executive Director
ILSI Japan

<Summary>

The Codex Committee on Food Additives held its 44th Session in Hangzhou, Peoples Republic of China from March 12th to 16th, 2012. The Session was attended by 211 delegates representing 51 Member Countries and 29 Member organization and international organizations. The summary and conclusions of the Session are as follows;

The Committee agreed;

- 1) Agreed draft at step 8 and step 8/5
 - to advance to Step 8 and Step 5/8, respectively, the draft and proposed draft food additive provisions of the General Standards for Food Additives (GSFA).
 - to advance to Step 8 the revision of the Codex Standard for Food Grade Salt.
 - to advance to Step 8 the proposed draft amendments to the International Numbering System (INS).
 - to advance to Step 5/8 the Specifications for the Identity and Purity of Food Additives arising from the 74th JECFA meeting
- 2) Other adopted item
 - to prepare a project document for new work in the revision of the Guidelines for the Evaluation of Food Additive Intakes (CAC/GL 3-1989)
 - to forward to adapt the Risk Analysis Principles applied by the Codex Committee on Food Additives and to include in the Procedural Manual.
 - to recommend actions required as a result of changes in the ADI status and other Toxicological recommendations arising from the 74th JECFA meeting.
 - to include in the GSFA new food additives provisions and to circulate the two provisions for aspartame acesulfame salt at Step 3.
 - to establish e-WG to compile information on the detailed list of the 107 food colors evaluated by JECFA since 1956 in order to make mechanism for re-evaluation of substances by JECFA.
- 3) Revocation/discontinuation of existing specification
 - to propose to revoke food additive provisions of the GSFA.
 - to discontinue work on a number of draft and proposed draft food additives provisions of the GSFA
- 4) Matters to be reported to the 35th Session of the Commission
 - to propose to revoke the Information on the Use of Food Additives in Foods (CAC/MISC 1-1989).
 - to endorse and/or revise the ML for Food Additives and Processing aids.
 - to use the decision-tree as tool for working on the alignment of commodity standards and the GSFA and
 - to continue testing the decision-tee on the alignment of the food additive provisions for bouillons and consommés, as well as the chocolate and cocoa products.
 - to forward to adapt the revised titles and descriptors of food category 16.0 and 12.6.1 and to propose to revoke and discontinue the food additive provisions of food category 16.0.
 - to forward the Priority list of substances proposed for evaluation by JECFA.

Report of the 40th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling

HIROAKI HAMANO

Advisor

ILSI Japan

<Summary>

The Fortieth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling was held at the Ottawa Convention Centre, Canada from 15 to 18 May 2012. The Session was attended by 220 delegates representing 63 member countries, one member organization (EU) and 20 international organizations. Total 13 participants attended from Japan consisting of 2 from the Consumer Affairs Agency, 2 from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 8 from NGOs including 4 from ILSI Japan and the author as a technical advisor to the government delegation. The summary and conclusions of the Session are as follows.

The Committee agreed to advance to the following Step 8:

- Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (CAC/GL 2-1985) : a new definition of nutrient reference values (Section 2);
- Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods (CAC/GL 32-1999): use of ethylene for ripening of fruit (Annex 1).

To advance to the following Step 5/8:

- Guidelines on Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23-1997): a new definition for non-addition claim (Section 2), amendments to the section on comparative claims (Section 6) and conditions for non-addition of sugars claim (Section 7);
- Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling (CAC/GL 2-1985): provisions for mandatory nutrition labelling (Section 3);
- Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods (CAC/GL 32-1999): inclusion of new substances (Annex 2, Table 2).

To advance to the following Step 5:

- Guidelines on Nutrition and Health Claims (CAC/GL 23-1997): non-addition of sodium salts claim (Section 7).

To return to the following Step 2:

- Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods (CAC/GL 32-1999): Organic Aquaculture for redrafting by an electric working group, circulation for comments at Step 3, for consideration by a physical working group and at the next session at Step 4.

To request CCNFSDU:

- To give advice as to whether the condition for 10% of the NRV for comparative claims for micronutrients (Section 6.3 in the Guidelines on Nutrition and Health Claims) is still in line with current evidence based guidance on micronutrients, particularly in light of the work being undertaken on NRV, and on the establishment of conditions for claims for free of TFA and if the advice was positive, whether the claims should be made per 100g or 100ml or per serving;
- To consider requesting CCMAS to review questions related to methods of analysis for trans fatty acids in foods.

Report of the 6th Session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods

RYUJI YAMAGUCHI, Ph.D.

Executive Director

ILSI Japan

<Summary>

The Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF) held its 6th Session in Maastricht (the Netherlands) from March 26th to 30th, 2012, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Netherlands. The Session was attended by 183 delegates representing 58 Member Countries, one Member Organization and 15 Member organization and international organizations. The ILSI delegation led by the author was two members from ILSI Japan.

Mr. Martin Weijtens, Head of Unit, Department for Animal Supply Chain and Animal Welfare, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, the Netherlands, chaired the meeting.

Main items were “Maximum Levels for Melamine in Food”, “Maximum Levels for Arsenic in Rice”, “Amendments to Codex General Standard for contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed” and “Discussion paper on guidance for Risk management options in light of different risk Assessment Options”

The Committee agreed;

1) Agreed draft at step 8 and step 8/5

- The Code of Practice for the Prevention and reduction of Ethyl Carbamate Contamination in Stone Fruit Distillates as proposed by the Committee.
- Forward the proposed revised Risk Analysis Principles Applied by the CCCF.
- Forward the proposed revised COP for Source Directed Measures to Reduce Contamination of Food with Chemicals as to their applicability to feed and the proposed revised definition of contaminants.
- Forward the proposed draft maximum level of 0.15mg/kg for melamine in liquid infant formula as consumed without note on the exemption from the ML.
- Forward the Proposed Draft ML of 10µg/kg for total aflatoxin in Dried Figs including the sampling plan

2) Other adopted item

- Amended the Standard for Natural Mineral Waters as proposed by the Committee namely: the removal of footnote 3 as these were considered quality parameters and did not require endorsement by CCCF.
- Agreed that CCMAS should be requested to identify suitable methods of analysis for the determination of inorganic arsenic in rice in the establishment of MLs.
- A discussion paper considering the possibility to develop a COP in Rice should be prepared for consideration by the next session of Committee.
- Agreed to retain the proposed draft maximum levels at Step 4 for total arsenic in rice (raw) at 0.3 mg/kg and rice (polished) at 0.2 mg/kg at 8th Session.
- Agreed to return the proposed draft MLs for DON to Step 2/3, and to re-establish the eWG to redraft the proposals for ML for DON and its associated sampling plan.
- Agreed to develop a discussion paper to identify the gaps in the COP for Prevention and Reduction of Mycotoxin Contamination in Cereals and the need for a separate COP for

fumonisin in maize.

- Agreed to re-establish the eWG to continue discussion on editorial amendments to the GSCTFF to the next session.
 - Agreed to initiate new work on the development of a COP for weed control to prevent and reduce PA contamination in food and feed.
 - Agreed to start new work on the revision of the MLs for lead in fruit juices, milk and secondary milk products, and so on as presented in the project document. The WG did not identify any need for revision of the codes of practices.
 - Agreed to initiate new work on the development of an annex for the management of aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in sorghum to the COD, subject to approval by the 35th Session of CAC.
 - Agreed to append the document to the report for future reference and to request CCGP to explore ways to make information and other similar documents available in the Codex system
 - Endorsed the Priority list of contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants such as 3-MCPD esters, glycidyl esters, pyrrolizine alkaloids and non-dioxin like PCBs for JECFA evaluation and agreed to reconvene the in-session WG at its next session. With regard to the request for an exposure assessment of cadmium from cocoa and cocoa product, the Committee agreed to include the proposal in the list
 - Report from the follow-up recent JECFA assessment and Identification of topics for future work
 - **Cyanogenic glycosides**
Agreed to establish an eWG to start new work on a COP and MLs for hydrocyanic acid in cassava and cassava products for comments at Step 3.
 - **Radionuclides In food**
Agreed to establish an eWG to start new work on levels for radionuclides in food for comment at Step 3, subject to approval by the 35th Session of the Commission.
 - **Methyl mercury**
Agreed to the development of a discussion paper on the review of the guideline level for methyl mercury in fish and predatory fish through an eWG
 - **Aflatoxins in cereals**
Agreed to the development of a discussion paper on aflatoxins in cereals through an eWG for consideration.
- 3) Matters to be reported to the 35th Session of the Commission
- Agreed to recommend to the 35th Session of the CAC revocation of CAC/GL 6-1991 Guideline Levels for Vinyl Chloride Monomer and Acrylonitrile in Food and Packaging Material as the GLs for these compounds were already transferred into the GSCTFF

ILSI Japan-ILSI SEAR Round Table Meeting

Pauline Chan
Director of Scientific Programs
ILSI SEAR

Teoh Keng Ngee
The Scientific Program Manager
ILSI SEAR

On May 23, 2012, several members of ILSI Japan and representatives from ILSI Southeast Asia Region (SEAR) met at the Tokyo Office for a Round Table Meeting to discuss and share updates on recent scientific and regulatory issues that are affecting stake-holders in the food sector. Members of ILSI Japan who attended the meeting include Ajinomoto, Danisco, Kirin, Nestle, Nichirei Foods, Suntory, Takasago, Ueno Fine Chemicals Industry and Yakult. Members from ILSI Southeast Asia Region were Ms. Pauline Chan and Mr. Keng Ngee Teoh. Dr. Ryuji Yamaguchi, Executive Director of ILSI Japan provided the opening remarks and introduction. This was followed by several presentations from both ILSI Japan and ILSI SEAR.

1. Updates from ILSI Southeast Asia Region

Ms. Pauline Chan, Scientific Director of ILSI SEAR, shared a presentation on ILSI SEAR's recent scientific program updates. Some of the recent highlights include the 2nd International Conference for Sharing Information on Food Standards in Asia that was held in Jakarta, Indonesia on February 22nd, 2012; the publication of the ILSI SEAR Report on "Regulatory Status of Micronutrient Fortification in Southeast Asia"; and publication of the Report on the "Symposium on Nutrition and Cognition – Towards Research and Application for Different Life Stages" in the Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Ongoing activities by ILSI SEAR include a research project for a systematic review on salt intake and salt reduction initiatives in Southeast Asia; as well as the 7th Seminar and Workshop on Nutrition Labeling and Claims, which will be held in Bangkok, Thailand on August 29-31, 2012.

2. Updates from ILSI Japan

Mr. Hidekazu Hosono from ILSI Japan provided a presentation on the recent collaborative efforts between ILSI Asian branches regarding the harmonization of food regulations within the Asian region. He highlighted the difficult challenges of this process, which are due to the diversity of regulations between different countries and the dynamic nature of food regulations that are constantly changing.

Mr. Hiroaki Hamano further provided some updates on recent regulatory developments both at the international level and within Japan. One of the recent issues relate to the adoption of mandatory nutrition labeling by the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU). Meanwhile, the Consumer Affairs Agency of Japan is also intending to adopt mandatory labeling in the new Food Labeling Act. In addition, there is also a proposal to include "non-added" food additive claims in the new Japanese regulations, which would allow producers to claim that certain foods are without or free of food additives.

Finally, Dr. Masanori Kohmura also shared a recent case example regarding the risk as-

assessment of a new food additive by the Food Safety Commission of Japan.

3. Conclusion

Apart from providing updates, the meeting also discussed the possibility of setting up of an International Cooperation Platform (ICP) by ILSI SEAR, which is modeled after the International Country Committee (ICC) established by ILSI Japan. Finally, Ms. Pauline Chan provided the closing remarks for the meeting.

<Biography>

Ms. Pauline Chan is Director of Scientific Programs for the Southeast Asian Region branch of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI). Her responsibilities include the development and facilitation of scientific meetings and programs. Actively involved with the Singapore Nutrition and Dietetic Association (SNDA), Ms. Chan is a member of SNDA's Main Committee, as well as the Chair of its Public Education Committee. She is also a registered dietitian (R.D.) with the American Dietetic Association. Ms. Chan received her Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and her Master's degree in Nutrition and Dietetics from New York University, USA.

Mr. Teoh Keng Ngee is the Scientific Program Manager in charge of food safety and biotechnology programs for the Southeast Asian Region branch of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI). Prior to joining ILSI SEA Region, Mr. Teoh was an intern at the Food Safety & Zoonoses Department at WHO, where he assisted the INFOSAN Secretariat during the 2009 melamine incident and co-authored a publication on the event. He is a member of the International Association of Food Protection. Mr. Teoh received his Bachelor's degree in Life Sciences from the University of Toronto, Canada, and his Master's degree in Food Safety from Wageningen University, the Netherlands.

International Symposium on Harmonization of Food Additives Regulations in ASEAN Region

Pauline Chan

Director of Scientific Programs ILSI SEAR

Teoh Keng Ngee

The Scientific Program Manager ILSI SEAR

ILSI Japan, ILSI Southeast Asia Region and the Japan Food Additives jointly organized the International Symposium on Harmonization of Food Additives Regulation in ASEAN Region, in conjunction with the 17th International Food Ingredients and Additives Exhibition and Conference (IFIA), which was held at the Tokyo Big Sight International Exhibition Center from May 23-25, 2012. The symposium attracted close to 250 participants who were interested to learn more about food additive regulations in ASEAN countries as well as ongoing harmonization initiatives.

1. Symposium Program

The symposium was chaired by Dr. Tadashi Hirakawa, President of the Japan Food Additive Association and Ms. Pauline Chan, Scientific Director of ILSI SEAR. The symposium program is as follows:

13:00-13:15 h

Opening Remarks: Development of food additive regulations in Asian countries and consistency of Japanese regulation

Dr. Tadashi Hirakawa, Japan Food Additive Association

13:15-14:00 h

Current status of food standard harmonization in ASEAN countries – ACCSQ and Indonesian food additive regulations

Prof. Dedi Fardiaz, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia

14:05-14:50 h

Food additives in Thailand and the efforts of harmonization for ASEAN common market

Ms. Chitra Settaudom, Food and Drug Administration, Thailand

14:55-15:40 h

Database for ASEAN food safety standard and food additive regulation in Singapore

Mr. Keng Ngee Teoh, ILSI SEAR, Singapore

15:50-16:50 h

Panel discussion

Prof. Dedi Fardiaz, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia

Ms. Chitra Settaudom, Food and Drug Administration, Thailand

Mr. Keng Ngee Teoh, ILSI SEAR, Singapore

Dr. Yoko Ogiwara, Ajinomoto, Co., ASEAN Headquarters, Thailand

2. Symposium Summary

The food additive regulatory frameworks of three ASEAN countries – Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore were shared by the symposium speakers with the participants. They also shared

ongoing harmonization efforts for regional food additive standards, including the work of the ASEAN Consultative Committee on Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) Prepared Foodstuff Product Working Group (PFPWG), which is the official ASEAN working group responsible for harmonization of food standards, as well as by ILSI SEAR on the ASEAN Food Safety Standards Database for food additives. The challenges facing the harmonization initiatives were also presented, such as the need to reach broad consensus with many different stakeholders within ASEAN, the need for further capacity building in scientific risk assessment, as well as the need to develop additional supporting infrastructure to support the harmonization work.

3. Conclusion

The symposium was successful in sharing information on food additive regulatory frameworks in ASEAN as well as providing updates on the ongoing process of harmonization of these food additive regulations. One of the key messages of the symposium was that although the deadline to achieve the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 is fast approaching, ASEAN countries still have a lot of work to do before harmonization of food additive standards can be achieved. Partnerships and collaborations between different stakeholders and countries are therefore necessary to help move this challenging process forward. Such symposiums that act as a forum to exchange knowledge between ASEAN and Japanese stakeholders are thus very useful.

<Biography>

Ms. Pauline Chan is Director of Scientific Programs for the Southeast Asian Region branch of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI). Her responsibilities include the development and facilitation of scientific meetings and programs. Actively involved with the Singapore Nutrition and Dietetic Association (SNDA), Ms. Chan is a member of SNDA's Main Committee, as well as the Chair of its Public Education Committee. She is also a registered dietitian (R.D.) with the American Dietetic Association. Ms. Chan received her Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and her Master's degree in Nutrition and Dietetics from New York University, USA.

Mr. Teoh Keng Ngee is the Scientific Program Manager in charge of food safety and biotechnology programs for the Southeast Asian Region branch of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI). Prior to joining ILSI SEA Region, Mr. Teoh was an intern at the Food Safety & Zoonoses Department at WHO, where he assisted the INFOSAN Secretariat during the 2009 melamine incident and co-authored a publication on the event. He is a member of the International Association of Food Protection. Mr. Teoh received his Bachelor's degree in Life Sciences from the University of Toronto, Canada, and his Master's degree in Food Safety from Wageningen University, the Netherlands.